

(c) The number of posts lying vacant in various departments in Zonal Railways as on 01.01.2017 is 2,26,592 (Provisional) in Group 'C' category including erstwhile Group 'D' category. Filling up of vacancies is a continuous process through various modes of intake. The policy of the Railway administration is to fill up the vacancies as per laid down procedure through Railway Recruitment Boards and Railway Recruitment Cells. There is always a time lag between occurrence of vacancies and processing the same for filling up, which involves notification of vacancies, holding examinations, finalization of select panels and issue of appointment letters. However, manpower planning requires continuous review of sanctioned strength in view of ever changing technology, working systems and creation of new assets and introduction of new trains.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Mushroom farming

641. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH MAHRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the practice of using straw for growing mushrooms by farmers in certain districts of Punjab; and

(b) if so, whether Government endorses it as a 'best practice' to be promoted in other States, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) Yes, Sir. Wheat and Paddy straw are used in Punjab for growing of mushrooms.

(b) Yes, the use of paddy/wheat straw is endorsed as a 'best practice' for mushroom growing in other States also.

Payment of insurance amount as compensation

†642. SHRI SURENDRA SINGH NAGAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has paid insurance amount as compensation for damage of crops due to floods and drought during the current year;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.